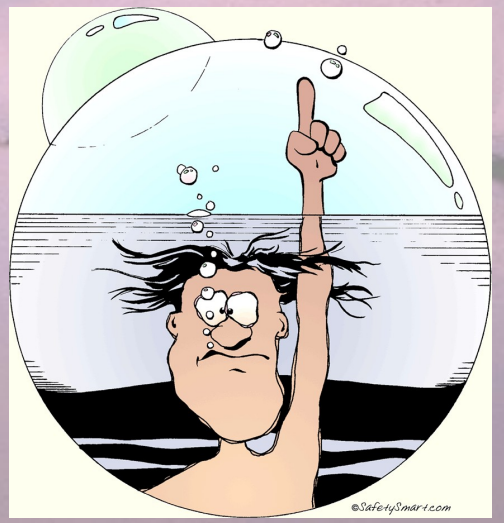
Swimming Safety

Swimming Safety

- **Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a course to learn or improve your ability to swim, contact your local Red Cross chapter.**

- **Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone.**

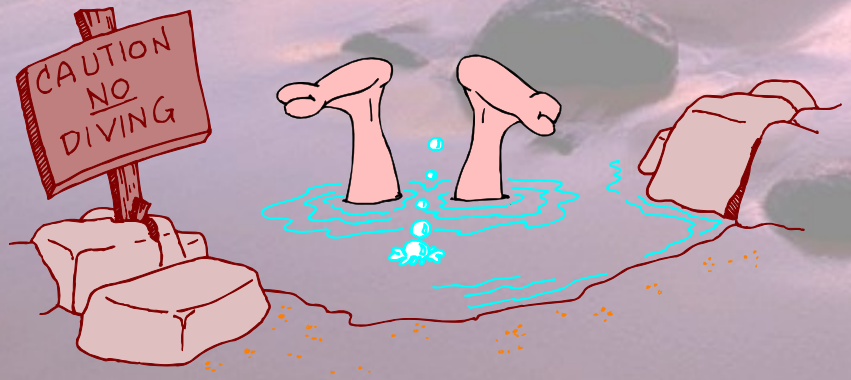


Swimming Safety

- **Know your swimming limits and stay within them. Don't try to keep up with a stronger, skilled swimmer or encourage others to keep up with you.**

- **Swim in supervised areas only.**

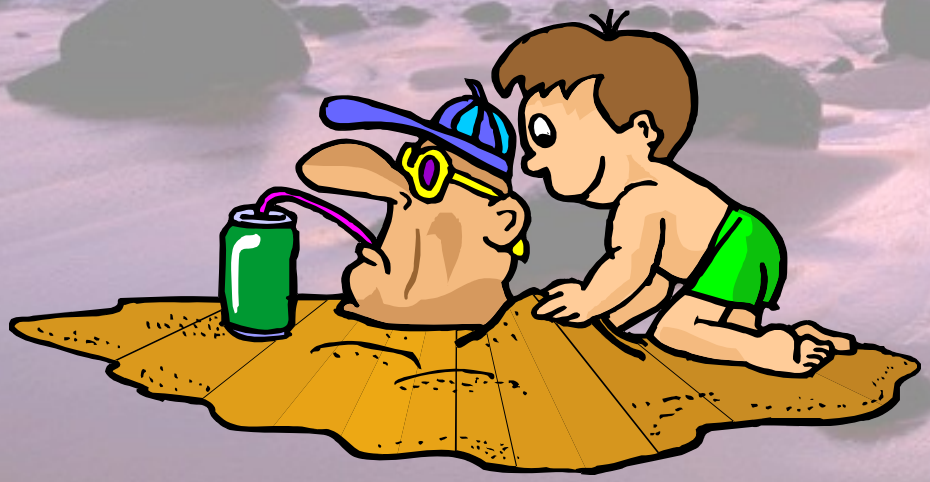
Swimming Safety



- **Obey "No Diving" signs that indicate the area is unsafe for headfirst entries. Enter feet-first into water rather than headfirst if you don't know the depth. In addition, learn the correct way to dive from a qualified instructor.**

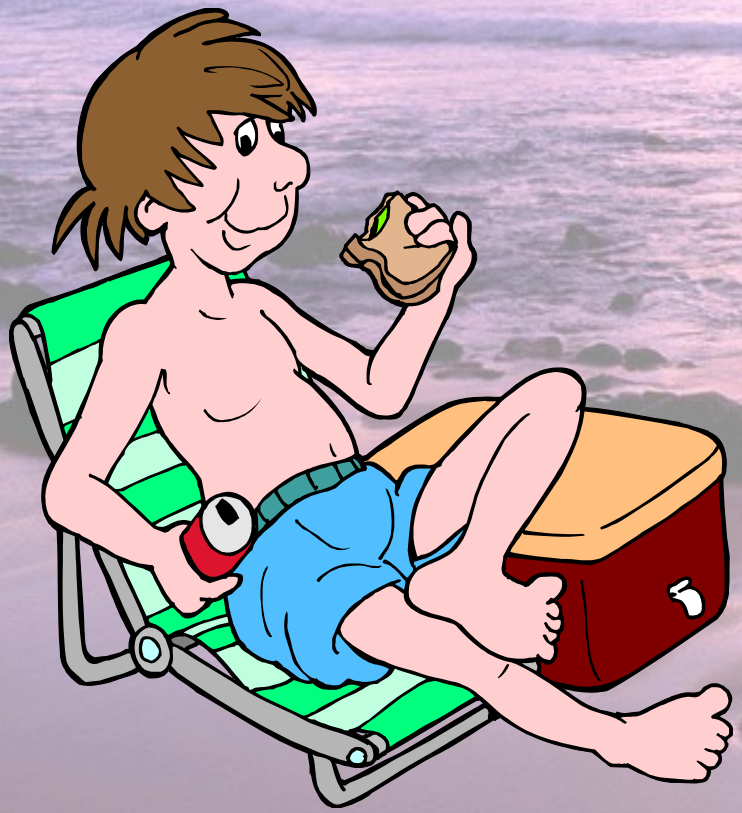
Swimming Safety

Watch out for the "dangerous too's" -- too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.



Do not chew gum or eat while you swim; you could easily choke.

Swimming Safety



- **Use common sense about swimming after eating. In general, you do not have to wait an hour after eating before you may safely swim. However, if you have had a large meal, it is wise to let digestion get started before doing strenuous activity such as swimming.**

Swimming Safety

- **Alcohol and swimming don't mix. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance, and coordination, especially in the water. It affects your swimming and diving skills and reduces the body's ability to stay warm.**

- **Wear foot protection: people's feet can get burned from the sand or cut from glass hidden in the sand .**

Swimming Safety

- **Know local weather conditions and prepare for electrical storms. Because water conducts electricity, it is wise to stop swimming or boating as soon as you see or hear a storm.**

- **Know how to prevent, recognize, and respond to emergencies. Remember CHECK-CALL-CARE: CHECK the scene to ensure it's safe and CHECK the victim, CALL 9-1-1 or your local emergency number, and CARE for the person until help arrives.**

Swimming Safety

Protect your skin: Sunlight contains two kinds of UV rays -- UVA increases the risk of skin cancer, skin aging, and other skin diseases. UVB causes sunburn and can lead to skin cancer.

Limit the amount of direct sunlight you receive between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor

Swimming Safety

Drink plenty of water regularly and often even if you do not feel thirsty. Your body needs water to keep cool. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine in them. They can make you feel good briefly but make the heat's effects on your body worse.

This is especially true with beer, which dehydrates the body.

Undercurrents

- **Undercurrents make swimming hazardous along the entire coast.**
- **What makes this so hazardous for the swimmer is that one never knows exactly where to expect this undertow. Distance varies at different beaches. The tide and weather also contributes to the seriousness of this problem. Believe it or not, some undertows are so strong that even a good swimmer cannot survive unless he recognizes the situation, does not panic and knows what to do to get himself out of the perilous predicament.**

Undercurrents

- **Undertow is produced by a mass of deep water moving toward shore, which strikes a sharp drop in the Gulf floor, known as the "Green Bank". The upper portion of this mass continues as breakers until it hits the beach.**

This undertow can be much stronger during rough weather or when the waves are high.

Undercurrents

A person wading or swimming in a close proximity to a sharp drop of the Gulf floor, or "Green Bank", may feel an outward or downward pull.

If this occurs, persons involved should head for shore immediately. If not, wader or swimmer might find themselves sucked underneath the surface and swept over the bank into deep and dangerous water.

Undercurrents

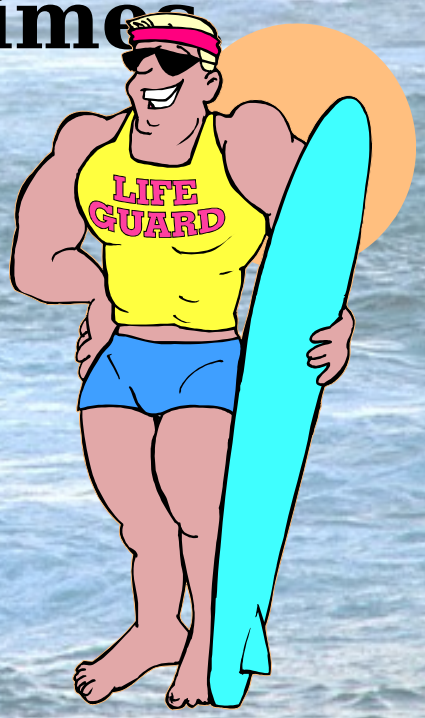
This sudden pull into undertow causes even good swimmers to panic. Most persons attempt to fight an undertow by trying to swim upwards and back toward the beach. Very few survive such an attempt. Why? Because normally one cannot fight an undertow and win.

There is a way to survive this ordeal. Keep your senses and don't panic. Always swim with the undertow; at the same time work your way outward and gradually up to the surface. After reaching the surface, swim with the surface current toward shore. If a long way to shore, don't overexert, swim a while, then float. Whatever you do, keep calm and avoid panic.

Undercurrents

The only sure way to avoid exposure to this emergency is to swim or wade only at authorized beaches where lifeguards are on-duty at all times.

Never swim alone or when the waves are high or the weather is rough. Be your own "Life Preserver". Have fun but take precautions. They might save your life.



Salt-Water Marine Life

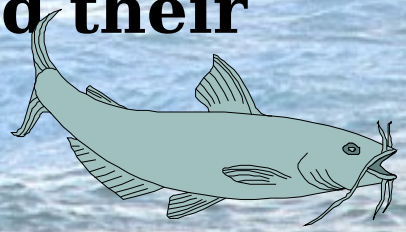
Salt-Water Marine Life: San Antonio is only a 3-hour drive from the coast and since this may be the first time some people have ever seen or been exposed to the ocean and it's marine life, they may not realize just what it is they're supposed to look out for and avoid.

Those most likely to be injured by salt-water marine animals are the swimmers and

Salt-Water Marine Life

CATFISH

Not dangerous, but capable of inflicting a painful wound, is the Catfish. All species of catfish have spines on their dorsal and pectoral fins, which are coated with an infectious slime. When jabbed into the hand, these spines will cause a puncture wound, which, in some people, can result in a painful local reaction; the hand will swell, and some individuals have become violently ill. Children should be warned of this hazard and be assisted, to avoid their getting "finned".



Salt-Water Marine Life

There are three types of marine life in the Gulf that should be cause for concern for the swimmer.

Only one is aggressive (the shark) - the other two are merely going about their business. Being what they are, they cause injury only because an unwary swimmer disturbed them (the stingray), or got tangled up in their means of obtaining food (the jellyfish/Portugese man-of-war).

Salt-Water Marine Life

SHARKS

Anywhere there is salt water, there are sharks. There have been volumes written about this deadly fish, and we won't attempt to enlarge on it here.

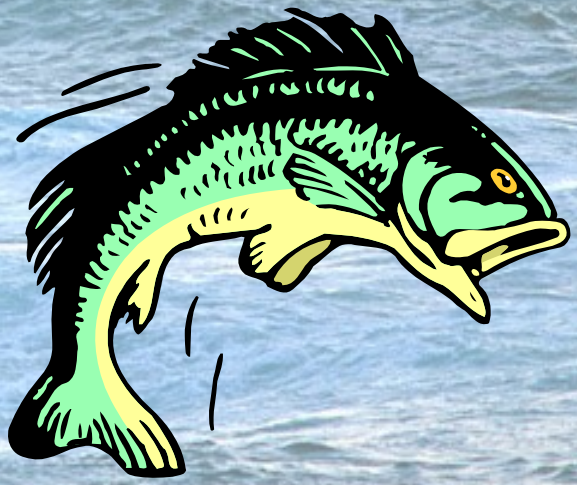
If there are sharks in the area, GET OUT OF THE WATER AS QUICKLY AND QUIET POSSIBLE.

This is important; sharks are attracted not only by blood, but also by water vibrations. A swimmer thrashing on the

Salt-Water Marine Life

A very small amount of blood in the water can bring any shark in the area running; so, if you cut your foot on a shell or piece of glass, get out of the water! Spearfishers, if you tie your catch to yourself by a short line, you become fair game to a poaching shark - who won't bother to make the distinction between you and your fish.

Put any speared fish in a floating basket, or tie to a line at least 25 feet



Salt-Water Marine Life

STING RAYS

Inoffensive cousin to the shark, the stingray is responsible for severe lacerations to swimmers and waders because of his nature; he buries in the sand and he doesn't like to be stepped on.

The reaction of a stepped-on ray is automatic and instinctive - the barbed tail will whip forward with incredible speed and lash the object pressing on it's

Salt-Water Marine Life

If it's a swimmer's foot, a deep, jagged wound is the result. The serrated edge of the sting is coated with venom that will cause a severe reaction to the nervous system. Usually such a wound will require medical attention.

To avoid bothering this fellow, don't wade in bare feet and shuffle your feet as you walk. This way, if a stingray is buried in the sand, your foot will nudge

Salt-Water Marine Life

PORTUGESE MAN-OF-WAR

Not a true Jellyfish, the Portuguese Man-Of-War lacks the ability to propel itself through the water; however, this becomes very academic to the swimmer who gets entangled in its long, trailing ten

Capable of inflicting an excruciatingly painful sting, this creature can disable a swimmer. Individuals will react violently to the sting of the Man-Of-War and require

Salt-Water Marine Life

At the mercy of the wind, the Man-Of-War sometimes drift ashore by the thousands, where they die on the beach. Children (and adults) are attracted by the iridescent, blue air bladders and delight in popping them with their feet.

In bare feet, this can be like stepping on a bed of hot coals, because even though the Man-Of-War is dead, it's tentacles will retain their sting.

Salt-Water Marine Life

They are difficult to see in the water, their air bladders appear as bubbles on the surface, while the tentacles trail underwater. During times when they are being blown ashore, swimmers should get out of the water.

Stinging cells on the tentacles are what create the intense pain. It can be eased by applications of ammonia or meat tenderizer.

In The Event of a Drowning

Remove the victim from the water, have someone call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.

Check consciousness and breathing. If the victim is not breathing, open the airway and attempt rescue breathing.

If breaths do not go in, re-tilt the head and attempt rescue breathing again.

If air still does not go in, give abdominal thrusts (Heimlich maneuver) for children and adults to clear the airway.

Once the airway is clear, provide rescue breathing or CPR as needed.

Scuba Safety

Each springtime the day-dreaming of most red-blooded young adventurers turns to thoughts of how much fun it would be to learn to skin dive or dive with the use of Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus. At this stage of the game the recommended procedure is to RUN, not walk, to the nearest YMCA or city park or recreation director and enroll in the regularly offered classes on SCUBA diving.

Scuba Safety

There are diving clubs located in almost every city and state in the union and in most foreign countries. Don't be a do-it-at-home expert, but learn from a good instructor. The life you save will be your own.

In general the cost of diving gear is up to the individual. The minimum essentials are flippers for the feet, weight belt (can be handmade), snorkel and face mask, swim suit (the same one you use today), and for the hands a pair of white cotton work gloves to protect against rock cuts or shell edges. Let your instructor help you on the selection of the regulator), and airbottles. A wet suit in cold water adds a great deal to your safety and comfort.

Scuba Safety

Next to good equipment, the source of air is most important. Using the neighborhood gas station or tire compressor to fill your bottles is sure suicide. Unless a compressor is designed to produce breathing air, it more than likely uses oil to form the sealing action to provide the compression. In this case the air will contain air-oil mist which will certainly result in oil pneumonia, caused by this air oil coating of the working parts of the lungs.

Scuba Safety

The following hints or safety rules have been used by many divers. This list is not all-inclusive but only the beginning--a place of departure.

1. Be a good swimmer first. Equipment does not eliminate the inherent risks of swimming and diving. There is no substitute for the diver's alertness, common sense and self-discipline.

2. Receive competent instruction.

3. NEVER use oxygen in your tank. It is poison to the diver. Use clean, filtered, compressed air.

Scuba Safety

4. Know your decompression rules. Your instructor will explain the safety curve rules and decompression tables.

5. Don't exceed 130 feet. Even experienced divers should have a very good reason for going below 130 feet; nitrogen narcosis occurs at lower depths.

6. Never hold your breath while ascending. Always exhale on the way up. Slow up your rate of ascent when near the surface. Take at least 90 seconds to ascend the last 35 feet. Breaking this most important rule may result in air embolism.

Scuba Safety

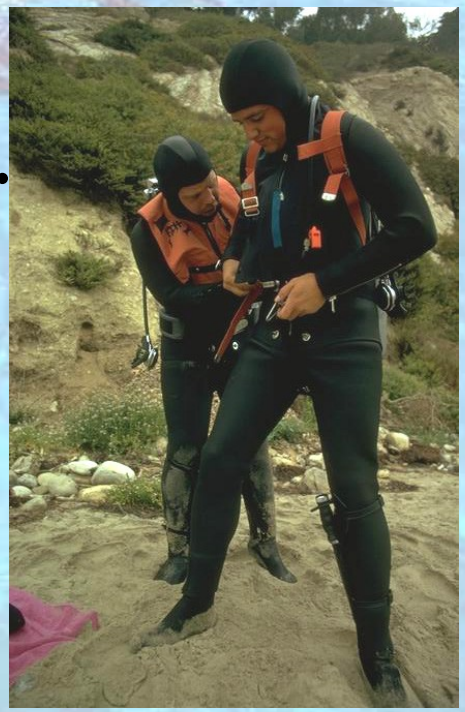
7. If the lung features a constant air reserve valve, make sure the air reserve is set before submerging.

8. ALWAYS use the buddy system. Don't dive alone.

9. Amateurs should not exceed 25 feet.

10. Always dive with a life jacket or float.

11. Always use a suit in cold water. A rubber suit should be used when the surface water is below 70 degrees. Remember that fresh water is often very



Scuba Safety

12. Avoid undue exertion under water. Don't get out of breath.

13. Protect your tank valve. If a cylinder valve were actually broken off by a severe blow, the escape of high-pressure air could discharge or jet the cylinder with great force.

14. Always use quick release fastenings. Shoulder straps, belt and weight belts must be fastened with a quick release. These devices come in many shapes and sizes. A good one will be easy to operate with one hand and yet difficult to open accidentally.

Scuba Safety

15. Always put the weight belt on last.

16. Never use earplugs. Water pressure can force the plug into the ear canal and rupture the drum.

17. Don't use goggles. The mask covers the nose as well as the eyes. This allows the diver to equalize the air pressure inside the mask with the outside water pressure by blowing air into the mask. With goggles the pressure inside cannot be equalized and increasing water pressure causes a squeeze.

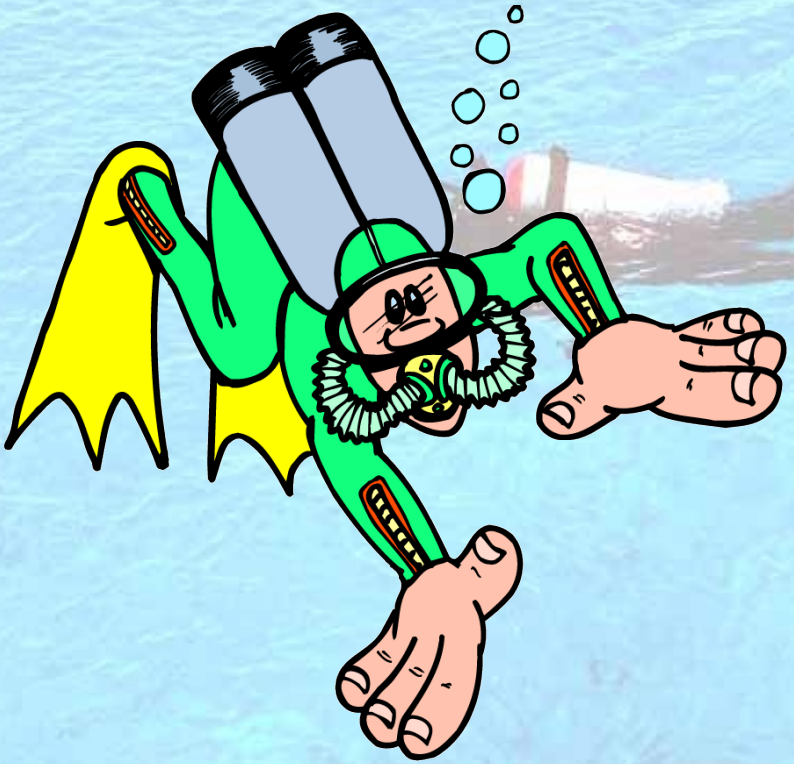
Scuba Safety

18. Don't dive when you don't feel top-notch.

19. Don't dive after eating. A normal meal may be eaten several hours before diving, but it should be high in carbohydrates with no gas-forming or heavy foods.

20. Know the life-saving techniques, including first-aid and artificial respiration.

Scuba Precautions



1. Plan each dive and dive only when all conditions for diving are right.
2. Always have a float available for rescue or self-rescue and wear an inflatable float such as the Res-O-Pak.
3. Always dive with a buddy; never dive alone.

Scuba Safety

4. Use properly adjusted equipment as required by conditions (facemask, weight belt, and protective rubber suit if the temperature of the water is below 70 degrees F.

5. Establish a system of communications with other divers.

6. Never dive when suffering from a sore throat, cold, or when otherwise feeling ill or excessively tired.

Scuba Safety

7. Adjust buoyancy to be slightly positive on full inhalation.

8. Under adverse, or hazardous conditions, when diving is absolutely necessary, use a lifeline or buddy line.

9. Descend at a rate that permits equalization of pressure in ear and sinus spaces. If pain is experienced in the ears, stop the descent, ascend a few feet, and attempt to clear by swallowing and by holding the mask against the face tightly, while exhaling through the nose.

Scuba Safety

10. Practice moderation in speed of swim, depth and time in the water.
11. Never ditch SCUBA underwater unless all else fails.
12. Always keep breathing nasally while under-water, particularly while ascending.
13. Never ascend faster than 60 feet per mm. A usually safe thumb rule is "Never rise faster than the slowest bubbles.

Scuba Safety

14. Surface carefully to avoid coming up under a boat or other object. If visibility is poor, extend one or both hands above the head to ward off an object.

15. If visual contact with a buddy is lost, listen for the sound of escaping bubbles from the other SCUBA. If unable to locate him in this manner, pound on the cylinder to attract attention. If this fails, surface, locate the buddy, and then descend together.

16. Check cylinder pressure on all equipment prior to a second dive.

Scuba Safety

17. Limit a second dive as required by decompression tables.

18. Do not eat or drink immediately prior to diving.

19. Remain physically qualified for diving. Have a periodic physical examination to ascertain this.

Quick Check–Know Before You Go
✔ Bring proof of certification
✔ Review the basic academics
✔ Get a medical checkup if there's any question about your fitness
✔ Go for a pool dive if you haven't been wet for several months
✔ Practice assembling your scuba gear at home
✔ Get dive accident insurance

Surfing Safety

- Make sure someone knows where you are - is watching you and is nearby
- Never swim/surf alone
- Always swim with a group
- Don't swim too soon after eating a meal
- Wait for at least one hour after eating

Surfing Safety

Only swim within your ability and depth

Don't overestimate your swimming ability

Don't stay too long in the water

Don't show off (holidays are times when some people attempt feats that they would not normally try)

Stay close to shore

Be aware and considerate of others

Don't push or dunk

Be careful when diving under waves - it may be too shallow, and could cause damage to the head or spine.

Surfing Safety

Be careful in white broken waves (can't see depth or people under waves)

Check with Lifesaver where it is safe to use boards, mats, etc.

Do not swim after dark, its dangerous and you can't see depth, obstacles, hazards (rips, holes, etc). It is also difficult to see people in trouble.

Surfing Safety

Obey all directions or signs. Water may appear calm but there could be rips, sweeps, etc - signs are placed for a reason, don't interfere with them - they may save a life. Examples of signs - "Rip - Don't Swim", "Dangerous Surf", "Rocks", etc.

Don't interfere when a rescue is being performed (unless asked). Stay well away from the scene.

Bathers should leave the water if requested (by bells, siren, whistle, loudhailers, etc). It would be for a number of reasons, eg, sharks, rescue in progress, stingers or re-siting flags.

Surfing Safety

Be careful when using surfboards or other flotation devices.

Obey the rules (blue and white flags) and stick to designated area. (Surf mats and tires are usually okay in the flagged area, but be aware of others).

Use leg ropes for personal safety and safety of others.

Do not let go of equipment - at least it keeps you afloat.

Make sure equipment is well maintained (sharp edges, broken fins, etc can cause injuries).

Surfing Safety

If in trouble, signal for help; Don't panic, Struggling will only exhaust you.

Signal for help by raising one arm vertically.

Adopt a floating position or tread water until help arrives.

Ways Not To Enjoy Your Water Recreational Activities

1.Don't learn how to swim or worry about first aid training; you can take care of yourself, even in deep water. What possible use would you ever have for artificial respiration?

2.Don't bother to wear a life preserver, even if you can't swim. They are a nuisance and don't look very glamorous, anyway.

Ways Not To Enjoy Your Water Recreational Activities

3.It isn't important to follow the rules of your activity. You have to have fun regardless of safety.

4.Be a "Show-Off". Swim where there is no lifeguard on-duty. You will probably never need one and besides they could be an annoyance and hinder your activities.

Ways Not To Enjoy Your Water Recreational Activities

5.Make like "Superman" and completely exhaust yourself. Fatigue doesn't bother you. You've done it before and gotten by. (Famous last words)

6.Don't tell anyone where you are going for these water activities, how long you will be there or when you-expect to return. Besides its nobody's business anyway, even if something happens.

Ways Not To Enjoy Your Water Recreational Activities

7.Don't bother to check weather forecasts. Anybody can tell the "Texas" weather.

8.Swim where there is boating, they will look out for you. So what if they’re not paying attention?

9.Make sure you eat a big meal before swimming, just in case you can’t get back to shore any time soon.

Ways Not To Enjoy Your Water Recreational Activities

10.Be sure and play with the marine life. They can provide days of fascinating memories!

11.Stay out in the sun all day, and get that "tan" you've been dreaming about.

12.Practice your diving in shallow waters. That way you won't drown.